

Celebrating Women's History

History of National Women's History Month

In 1980, the National Women's History Project (NWHPP) was founded in Santa Rosa, California, by Molly Murphy MacGregor, Mary Ruthsdotter, Maria Cuevas, Paula Hammett and Bette Morgan to broadcast women's historical achievements. The NWHPP started by leading a coalition that successfully lobbied Congress to designate March as National Women's History Month, now celebrated across the United States. Since 1987, the National Women's History Month resolution has been approved with broad-based bipartisan support in both the House and Senate. The idea of celebrating the unique, multicultural history of women in the U.S. has captured the imaginations of government agencies, businesses, schools, community groups, women's organizations, and thousands of individuals throughout the nation.

Learning the true stories of women's history has a positive effect on everyone. For women and girls, these empowering stories from America's shared past generate feelings of personal strength and new possibilities. Correspondingly, men and boys gain increased respect for women by knowing more about their individual accomplishments, and about the female experience across time. Celebrating women's lives—filled with courage, caring and contributions—is valuable for us all.

Women's history is filled with women whose lives and work have transformed American communities and the ideas of their day. Women's history is also about countless women who have lived out their lives quietly at the center of their families. Together, these women represent many and varied cultures, faiths, aspirations and beliefs. And, they have all contributed significantly to building our society and culture.

History looks different when the contributions of women are included as routinely as those of men. When we see history in this new way, it is as if we are looking through a wide-angle lens. More of the picture comes into view. By adjusting our focus, details that were missing become clear. An expanded view of history lets us see ourselves and our connection to the past differently. When we see history in a new way, we can see new possibilities for the future as well.